

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ET, US

SUBJ: US-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS FOLLOWING EVENTS BEGINNING JAN 28, 1977

1. ON JAN 28, USIS WAS STONED BY AN UNKNOWN GROUP OF PRESUMABLY ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY (EPRP) PERSUASION. ON JAN 30, A PRO-GOVT MASS RALLY WAS HELD AT WHICH LARGE NUMBERS OF ANTI-CIA AND SOME ANTI-AMERICAN PLACARDS WERE IN EVIDENCE. SINCE THEN, ANTI-CIA REFERENCES HAVE FREQUENTLY APPEARED IN MEDIA. ON JAN 31, MAAG WAS ATTACKED IN CIRCUMSTANCES VERY SIMILAR TO USIS. ON FEB 3, I ONCE MORE STRONGLY BROUGHT ANTI-CIA SUBJECT TO ACTING FONMIN'S ATTENTION AND WAS AGAIN ASSURED OF EPMG'S DESIRE MAINTAIN FRIENDLY RELATIONS. AT ALMOST EXACTLY SAME TIME, "REVOLUTIONARY JUSTICE" WAS BEING CARRIED OUT AGAINST SEVEN PMAC MEMBERS. ANOTHER MASS RALLY WAS HELD FEB 4. CIA PLACARDS AGAIN APPEARED AND ARE APPEARING AT MASS RALLIES THROUGHOUT COUNTRY. THIS TIME, MENGISTU MADE ONE REFERENCE TO CIA IN HIS EMOTIONAL ADDRESS TO CROWD (STATEMENT REPORTED PARA 4 ADDIS 686 - AS CARRIED IN ETHIOPIAN HERALD FOLLOWING DAY, MENGISTU SAID: "THERE IS NOTHING BUT OUR REVOLUTIONARY FERVOR TO EXPLAIN THE HOSTILITY OF THE SAUDI ARABIAN MONARCHS AND PRINCES, THE

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ANTI-COMMUNIST PETIT BOURGEOIS IN THE SUDAN AND OTHER REACTIONARY FORCES IN THE REGION WHO, UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE CIA, ARE HATCHING FUTILE PLOTS IN LEAGUE WITH THE SO-CALLED EDU, EPRP AND ELF.").

2. WHAT TO MAKE OF THIS SERIES OF EVENTS IN BILATERAL TERMS? THE TWO ATTACKS WERE NOT EPMG-INSPIRED, TO BEST

OUR KNOWLEDGE, AND EPMG RESPONDED SYMPATHETICALLY TO OUR REQUESTS FOR POLICE PROTECTION. QUANTITIES OF CIA PLACARDS ARE NOT NEW. WE HAD HOPED EPMG HAD DROPPED THEM BUT THIS OBVIOUSLY WAS NOT CASE. USG WAS NOT LINKED TO EVENTS OF FEB 3 EXCEPT BY ASSOCIATION OF CIA WITH PRINCIPAL EPMG ENEMIES EPRP, EDU AND ELF AND REFERENCE TO CHILE. WHETHER CIA AND USG SYNONYMOUS IN MINDS OF MANY ETHIOPIANS, ESPECIALLY UNEDUCATED, HOWEVER, IS AT LEAST QUESTION MARK. WE HAVE NOT THUS FAR SEEN CHARGES OF CIA COLLUSION TRANS-LATED INTO SPECIFIC ANTI-AMERICAN ACTS OR EVEN RHETORIC BY PRO-EPMG ELEMENTS.

3. EXCEPTION, OF COURSE, IS MENGISTU'S REFERENCE TO CIA, WHICH IS FIRST TO COME FROM EPMG SOURCE SINCE LAST SEPT AND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE PICKED UP AND REPEATED IN VARIOUS FORMS ALL OVER COUNTRY. IN MY JUDGMENT, WE SHOULD NOT LET IT GO UNCHALLENGED. CLEARLY, WHILE MY ORAL DEMARCHES AND THAT OF AMB SEELYE MAY HAVE HAD SOME EFFECT FOR A TIME, THEY HAVE BASICALLY FAILED TO GET OUR MESSAGE ACROSS TO DIRG WHICH IN TIME OF SEVERE STRESS REVERTED TO THEME AS SOON AS GOING GOT TOUGH. I THEREFORE SUGGEST THAT 1) I SEEK AN EARLY APPOINTMENT WITH FONMIN KIFLE (I'M SUPPOSED TO HAVE ONE ANYWAY TO DISCUSS GODLEY SITUATION), TO EXPRESS OUR DISMAY AT MENGISTU'S REFERENCE TO CIA, 2) THIS TIME WE GIVE EPMG A PIECE OF PAPER (EITHER AIDE MEMOIRE OR LETTER) NOTING INTER ALIA THAT EPMG HAS REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED DESIRE FOR GOOD RELATIONS YET TURNS RIGHT AROUND AND ACCUSES US THROUGH ONE OF OUR AGENCIES OF "SUPERVISING" ALL THEIR CURRENT CONFIDENTIAL

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ENEMIES. SUCH CHARGES, DESPITE REASSURANCES, CANNOT HELP BUT HAVE A BEARING ON BILATERAL RELATIONS, AND ARE BEING TAKEN SERIOUSLY IN WASHINGTON, AND 3) I REQUEST THROUGH KIFLE AN APPOINTMENT WITH NEW CHIEF OF STATE, WHOEVER HE MAY BE, TO DISCUSS BILATERAL RELATIONS. IN ADDITION, I SUGGEST THAT DEPT BEGIN CONSIDERING CAREFULLY WHAT DEPUTY ASST SECRETARY SEELYE MIGHT USEFULLY CONVEY TO EPMG DURING HIS VISIT ABOUT WASHINGTON PERCEPTIONS OF STATE OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. IF DEPT AGREES, TEXT OF AIDE MEMOIRE OR LETTER WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE. I'M BEGINNING TO RUN OUT OF WORDS ON CIA BUSINESS, AND FRESH APPROACH COULD BE HELPFUL.

4. IN BRIEF, I BELIEVE THAT, WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION MENGISTU REFERENCE, RECENT EVENTS DO NOT STRIKE US AS HAVING SPECIAL ANTI-AMERICAN CAST, NOR REFLECT ANY PARTICULAR CHANGE IN EPMG'S ATTITUDES TOWARD U.S., AND THAT WE ARE TOLD BY FONMIN AND ACTING FONMIN ABOUT EPMG'S DESIRE FOR GOOD RELATIONS IS PROBABLY AN ACCURATE

REFLECTION OF EPMG WISHES AS OF NOW. EPMG DOES NOT WANT TO, OR CANNOT AFFORD TO, CLOSE DOOR AND EVENTS OF LAST FEW DAYS, DESPITE MENGISTU'S OUTBURST, HAVE NOT CHANGED THEIR BASIC ATTITUDE. MOFA PROBABLY UNDERSTANDS WHAT WE HAVE BEEN SAYING ABOUT CIA, BUT COULD NOT ENTIRELY PREVENT MENGISTU UNDER PRESSURE OF EVENTS AND EMOTION FROM EXPRESSING LINE THAT HE MAY EVEN BELIEVE IN AND IN ANY CASE HAS PROBABLY BEEN PRESSED UPON HIM FOR SOME TIME BY EXTREME LEFTIST, ANTI-AMERICAN ELEMENT OF POLITBURO. PROBLEM, IT SEEMS TO ME, IS TO SOMEHOW GET MESSAGE ACROSS THAT WHETHER DIRG MEMBERS TAKE STATEMENTS SUCH AS MENGISTU'S SERIOUSLY OR EVEN WHETHER THEY REALLY MAKE CONNECTION BETWEEN CIA AND USG IN THEIR OWN MINDS, WE DO MAKE THE CONNECTION, AND THAT SUCH STATEMENTS CAN HAVE AN IMPORTANT IMPACT ON OUR RELATIONS, A MESSAGE THAT WE HAVE OBVIOUSLY NOT YET SUCCEEDED IN CONVEYING TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE.
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